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Message Text

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ACTION IO-14

INFO OCT-01 AF-10 ARA-10 EA-10 EUR-12 NEA-10 ISO-00
OES-07 COME-00 SS-15 SP-02 CIAE-00 INR-10 NSAE-00
ICA-11 PA-01 /113 W
----------007937 150556Z /23
R 140630Z APR 78
FM AMEMBASSY YAOUNDE
TO SECSTATE WASHDC 5211

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E.O. 11652: NA
TAGS: AORG, WIMO, CM
SUBJ: POTENTIAL US CANDIDATE FOR WMO SECRETARY GENERAL, DR. ROBERT M. WHITE

REF: 77 STATE A-4949

1. EMBASSY WAS APPROACHED BY SAMUEL MBELE-MBONG, GURC DIRECTOR OF METEOROLOGY, TO DISCUSS POSSIBLE CANDIDACY OF DR. ROBERT M. WHITE FOR WMO SECRETARY-GENERALSHIP. ECONOFF INFORMED MBELE-MBONG ALONG LINES REF A THAT ONLY IF DR. DAVIES SHOULD DECIDE NOT TO RUN WOULD U.S. CONSIDER PUTTING FORWARD CANDIDACY OF DR. WHITE. MBELE-MBONG SAID THAT AT RECENT NAIROBI REGIONAL WMO CONFERENCE HE HAD BEEN APPROACHED BY FRENCH DELEGATE, WHO REVEALED THAT THERE IS EMERGING CONSENSUS AMONG EUROPEANS TO THE EFFECT THAT TIME HAS COME FOR DR. DAVIES TO STEP DOWN. IF NECESSARY FRENCH FEEL HE SHOULD BE PERSUADED TO DO SO. FRENCHMAN FURTHER STATED THAT HE UNDERSTOOD DR. DAVIES WILL ONLY AGREE TO WITHDRAW IF HE IS ASSURED THAT HE WILL HAVE QUOTE ACCEPTABLE UNQUOTE SUCCESSOR, SUCH AS DR. WHITE. REPORTEDLY, EUROPEANS WOULD ALSO FAVOR WHITE CANDIDACY.

2. MBELE-MBONG STATED THAT HE PERSONALLY BELIEVED THAT DR. DAVIES SHOULD STEP DOWN. HE FEELS STRONGLY THAT AT THIS
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TIME WMO IS IN NEED OF NEW BLOOD AND OUTSTANDING LEADERSHIP. FURTHER, ON THE BASIS OF HIS SOUNDINGS MBELE-MBONG BELIEVES THAT MOST AFRICANS WOULD AGREE WITH THIS POSITION. HE PERSONALLY SUPPORTS CANDIDACY OF DR. WHITE BUT ON THIS ISSUE DOUBTS THAT OTHER AFRICANS FEEL THE SAME. HE SAID THAT NIGERIAN MEMBER EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE IS PERSONAL FRIEND OF DR. WHITE BUT AT SAME TIME NIGERIAN IS CONVINCED THAT WHITE CANDIDACY WOULD MEET WITH

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MUCH
OPPOSITION. MBELE-MBONG SPOKE WITH BOTH ETHIOPIANS AND
ALGERIANS AT NAIROBI AND HE SAID BOTH WERE QUOTE VIOLENTLY
UNQOUTE OPPOSED TO CANDIDACY OF DR. WHITE. HE CLAIMS THAT MOST
AFRICANS STRONGLY PREFER TO NOT HAVE OTHER US OR USSR
OCCUPY SECRETARY-GENERALSHIP OF WMO BECAUSE THEY FEEL THIS
WOULD QUOTE BREED SUSPICION UNQUOTE AND LEAD TO SUPERPOWER
DOMINATION. THEY WOULD PREFER A WEISS (AUSTRIA) OR SCHNEIDER
(SWITZERLAND) CANDIDACY SINCE BOTH COME FROM NEUTRAL COUNTRIES.

3. MBELE-MBONG PLANNING TO ATTEND EXECUTIVE SESSION IN GENEVA
IN JUNE. HE IS CURRENTLY SOUNDING OUT MINISTRY OF TRANSPORTATION
(WHICH COVERS WMO) ON WHAT WILL BE AN OFFICIAL GURC POSITION.
SUGGEST U.S. DELEGATION TO EXECUTIVE SESSION MEET WITH MBELE-MBONG

IN GENEVA. HE LIKES AMERICANS, (TO THE EXTENT THAT HE MARRIED ONE
WHILE WORKING ON HIS PHD AT COLORADO STATE UNIV), FOLLOWS WMO
CLOSELY, AND APPEARS TO HAVE GOOD CONTACTS AMONG AFRICANS.
EMBASSY WILL FOLLOW AND REPORT.
MITHOEFER

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Message Attributes

Automatic Decaptioning: Z
Capture Date: 01 jan 1994
Channel Indicators: n/a
Current Classification: UNCLASSIFIED
Concepts: ELECTION CANDIDATES
Control Number: n/a
Copy: SINGLE
Draft Date: 14 apr 1978
Decaption Date: 20 Mar 2014
Decaption Note: 25 YEAR REVIEW
Disposition Action: RELEASED
Disposition Approved on Date:
Disposition Case Number: n/a
Disposition Comment: 25 YEAR REVIEW
Disposition Date: 20 Mar 2014
Disposition Event:
Disposition History: n/a
Disposition Reason:
Disposition Remarks:
Document Number: 1978YAOUND01869
Document Source: CORE
Document Unique ID: 00
Drafter: n/a
Enclosure: n/a
Executive Order: N/A
Errors: N/A
Expiration:
Film Number: D780162-0246
Format: TEL
From: YAOUNDE
Handling Restrictions:
Image Path:
ISecure: 1
Legacy Key: link1978/newtext/t19780453/aaaabtch.tel
Line Count: 82
Litigation Code IDs:
Litigation Codes:
Litigation History:
Locator: TEXT ON-LINE, ON MICROFILM
Message ID: e48b01b0-c288-dd11-92da-001cc4696bcc
Office: ACTION IO
Original Classification: LIMITED OFFICIAL USE
Original Handling Restrictions: ONLY
Original Previous Classification: n/a
Original Previous Handling Restrictions: ONLY
Page Count: 2
Previous Channel Indicators: n/a
Previous Classification: LIMITED OFFICIAL USE
Previous Handling Restrictions: ONLY
Reference: 77 STATE A-4949
Retention: 0
Review Action: RELEASED, APPROVED
Review Content Flags:
Review Date: 05 may 2005
Review Event:
Review Exemptions: n/a
Review Media Identifier:
Review Release Date: N/A
Review Release Event: n/a
Review Transfer Date:
Review Withdrawn Fields: n/a
SAS ID: 2958686
Secure: OPEN
Status: NATIVE
Subject: POTENTIAL US CANDIDATE FOR WMO SECRETARY GENERAL DR ROBERT M WHITE
TAGS: AORG, CM, WMO, WIMO, (WHITE, ROBERT M)
To: STATE
Type: TE
vdkvgwkey: odbc://SAS/SAS.dbo.SAS_Docs/e48b01b0-c288-dd11-92da-001cc4696bcc
Review Markings:
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